6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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754 going to happen he slept across the doorway, so that she could not without waking him leave the house. The door was closed and fastened, he sleeping *inside*. In the early hours of the morning he awoke, and, fearing something unpleasant had taken place as the door was open, he called his brother who was sleeping upstairs. Together they searched for the woman, and found her lying outside in the yard, unconscious. When she recovered her senses, she said that for some nights previous she felt as if she was being called outside, and she tried hard to resist the impulse to go out of the house into the night. At last she could resist no longer and, altogether against her will, unfastened the door and went out. What happened then she knew not. There was neither removal of a fœtus nor death in this case. Such is the story. It is quite possible that stories of the kind are inculcated by wary husbands to keep the women indoors and prevent their being crowned with horns. At any rate the story is one of the kind such as every Nâyar believes. It is, I may say, quite plainly to be seen that, when the Nâyar constructs his house, he takes care that there are certain conveniences, so that the women need never leave the house at night. My narrator was a native gentleman in a position of authority, living at the scene of this strange story when the events related in it occurred not long ago. The persons were named, but I did not question them, as there is much objection to speak of such things to a stranger.

754 795 564 *The Ôḍi cult.*—The Parayan adepts in the magic Ôḍi cult are to some extent hereditary functionaries.* They form one of those hierarchies, common enough in this country, of which Europeans know so little; of which the people themselves know but little as nothing connected with them or with their system is written. It is custom pure and simple—custom which is the most difficult of all to approach and define within accuracy. We will put down what is known, in the way of popular belief of course, as may be free from error.

Those who belong to it, born into it so to speak, go through a certain novitiate, not easy; but those who wish to join it from outside the fraternity of the cult are required to *prove* themselves worthy to join it; and it is their trials as novices, terrifying and utterly filthy, which

* For much of this which follows I am indebted to Mr. U. Balakrishna Nâyar, who has kindly obtained for me matter which is in a general way, unobtainable to the European.

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622 initiate everything for the village, but the final sanction of his proposals rests with the Collector.

631 Above the village munsif is the Revenue Inspector who looks after the work of four or five village headmen. He has revenue functions only. For other purposes the Magistrate is the immediate superior of the *adhigari*. Next comes the Tahsildar, then the Sub-Collector, then the Collector.

692 Criminal cases are tried by the Magistrate. The Civil and Criminal Courts are situated in the village itself.

A story is told in the village that a poor agricultural man was asked by another, when the Collector had come to the village in one of his tours, whether the Collector or the *adhigari* was the superior officer. He replied, "I don't know, but the *adhigari* is richer, since he receives money yearly from us." The adhigari's *pay* is only Rs. 7 per mensem.*

The jurisdiction of the adhigari with regard to the criminal cases lies only in cases of petty thefts and nuisances, and in civil matters when the amount under dispute does not exceed Rs. 50.

Panchayat.—There is a judicial panchayat for civil cases in which the amount under dispute does not exceed Rs. 50, or Rs. 200 if both the parties agree. This was introduced three years ago as a tentative measure, but it has proved a success in spite of its drawbacks. The jurisdiction of the panchayat courts extends to four or five villages; and the personnel of the court is a non-official president nominated by the Government and the adhigaris of the villages. Nearly 500 civil suits of a minor character were tried last year. The introduction of this system in small cases has caused enormous saving to the parties since the expenditure is small. There is no necessity for a stamped paper, etc. This institution is an advance in the right direction, but the personnel needs change, since they are all the Government representatives and consequently the people have no part to play in the constitution of the court.

• 364 There is no administration of sanitation. It is left to take care of itself. In theory there is a rule that the roads must be swept once a day and some coolies are appointed for the purpose, but the work is practically neglected on account of lack of supervision.

625 There is a Sub-Inspector of Police and under him a head constable and constables. The people can easily get the help of the police.

691 A large percentage of population is engaged in litigation. There are three reasons:—(1) The Muhammadans are addicted to litigation with regard to the partition of their property. In fact no partition takes place without having recourse to courts. (2) The peculiarity of land tenure has been already described. (3) The indebtedness of the poor and their inability to pay. The result is the majority of the population are litigants.

627 Sometimes compromises are arranged by a gentleman in whom both the parties have faith. There is no compromise committee for the purpose, but the people fearing the expenses of the law courts sometimes settle matters among themselves by means of a third person. Such cases are rare.

[* The point of this story is that, in the Madras Presidency the Collector is the chief District officer. The Collector of Malabar, for example, rules over a population of close on three million people, subject to the Government in Madras.—Ed.]

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so long as they live, they have to keep their body and soul together. Thus year by year, the rich become richer and the poor poorer. The process is continuing at a fast rate and the people do not realize it. They are too ignorant and attribute everything to their fate and God's will. To add to these evils, in some years crops fail and there will be utter starvation. Thus the causes of indebtedness are— 511 426

(1) High rent.
(2) Population beyond means of subsistence.
(3) Lands limited in area.
(4) Absolute dependence on land of the population.

There is no instance of debtors who have entirely liberated themselves from debt in this desam. There is no co-operative society.

Sanitation.—In regard to sanitation, thanks to the peculiar customs of Malabar, the evils arising from the rigour of social rules are absent. Infant marriage and purdah are both absent. There is no problem of the disposal of night-soil here, for there are large unoccupied areas whither the people resort, while the women have latrines far out in their back compounds. As for insanitary habits, they are not addicted to any similar to what are found elsewhere. All bathe once a day in tanks or streams. There is neither much smoking or snuffing, but there is chewing (betel and tobacco and lime and arecanut all together) among all people, but not to such an extent as among people in Madras, etc. Drinking is a real evil among the Cherumas, but this is chiefly due to lack of proper food of other sorts. Several of them when asked why they drink have given the same unanimous answer, that "while stomach calls, one must respond, else not hear at all." The latter is of course the cheaper course. 364 [514] [515] 276 273

Good and clear water for drinking is easily got from private wells.

But with all these, the figure for the year of deaths from diseases and infant mortality is not encouraging. 165

The list contains the account of only one year that of 1915-16. But it still speaks for itself.

Kothachira.

Ages of dead.	Number according to age.	Fever.	Dysentery.	Tuberculosis.	Diarrhœa.	Dyspepsia.	Hysteria.	Karappani (skin blotched).	Other causes.
Lifeless birth	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Below 1	9	...	3	...	...	...	4	2	...
Between 1 and 10 ...	13	4	3	1	...	...	4	1	...
„ 10 „ 20 ...	1	1	...	..	...	...	...	...	...
„ 20 „ 30 ...	7	3	...	1	1	...	...	...	1
„ 30 „ 40 ...	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
„ 40 „ 50 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
„ 50 „ 60 ...	3	.	1	1	1	...	...	...	...
„ 60 „ 80 ...	5	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	1
Total ...	48	11	8	4	3	...	8	3	4